1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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love-charm designed to insure the young girl's coming to him. He then uses all persuasion to give her a child and, this achieved, abandons her to show his contempt for the family that has formally refused to accept him as a son-in-law. 584 [832] [578]

Usually, however, the visit is returned by the family of the girl, bearing a "response" of acceptance wrapped in a red silk handkerchief, "for victory." And just as the family of the young woman had known in advance of the coming of her suitor's relatives, word of the favorable verdict is now sent through indirect channels, so that the family of the young man may also be prepared to receive the emissaries who come on behalf of the girl. [212] [822]

With this formal acceptance of the young man's suit, the wedding waits until he has accumulated the requisites for a household. Custom dictates that even should he be prepared, the ceremony must be delayed for several months while he remains in a probationary state, to assure the family of his fiancée of his worthiness. The young woman is also under surveillance during this time, when she may be asked to help her future mother-in-law with the housework, and particularly with the washing and ironing of linens. Generally a period of from two to three years elapses before the bridegroom accumulates enough to fulfill his obligations in marriage. During this time the family of the young woman is acquiring the things she is expected to bring to her husband: linens and dishes — though in the poorer peasant families these items would not be provided her — cooking utensils, water-containers, knives, forks, and other things needed for the household. Her father also presents her with a horse, a donkey, six or seven pigs, the same number of goats, as well as chickens, guinea-hens, and turkeys. 583 584

Tokens of virginity are not demanded before the match, since Mirebalais custom requires that the girl tell before her marriage whether she has had relations with other men. She may be sent away if it is discovered that she has told an un- 584 836

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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584 836 truth, but the matter is recognized as one which concerns only her husband and herself, and if he is willing to keep her, it is his own affair. Consensus of opinion in Mirebalais 836 369 is that the percentage of girls who do not have pre-marital sexual relations is relatively small, but the belief is expressed that chastity is more prevalent among country women than among those of the town, where, in turn, it is more frequent than in larger centers such as Port-au-Prince. Even though 836 848 pre-marital relations are commonplace, however, the pregnancy of an unmarried girl is regarded as both reprehensible and unfortunate, and she is severely beaten for it by her family. In such cases, if the father of the unborn child will take the girl, his parents are sent to bring her, but where the parents of the man refuse to ask for the girl because they do not approve of her, then, if he still desires her, he must himself face the anger of her parents. Should he not wish to come for her, she may either remain with her family or seek work in another community. In any event, her child will be well cared for by her family, and no reproach will attach to it because of the circumstances of its birth.

585 782 776 Before a mating of any type is consummated, the familial spirits must be notified of the approaching event so that they may be well disposed toward it, for no union where this is neglected can enjoy happiness or peace. One Mirebalais woman was pointed out as an object lesson of the necessity of doing this. Though a devotee of several gods, neither she nor her husband was willing to perform the necessary rites for [753] [828] her gods before their marriage. She was suffering from an acute case of melancholia after the birth of her first child, and the prevailing opinion was that she was going mad because of the neglect of her duty toward her deities. Shortly before a woman goes to her husband, therefore, a *couvert sec* for the Rada deities is given both by herself and by her betrothed. If the family of either the young man or the woman possess deities of the powerful Pétro group, more inclusive offerings

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3



est. It was brought over from Africa apparently as early as 1509.[7] Oviedo describes it in 1526 as "a terrible pustular disease."[8] It so closely resembles syphilis that it has often been mistaken for that malady.[9] Untreated or wrongly treated it ravages the bodies of its victims, making them loathesome to behold. In the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince the Rockefeller staff found, out of 2,564 persons examined, 78 per cent affected with yaws. What is even more disturbing is that the young are afflicted. Dr. Lhérisson's investigations in one district revealed that 61.1 per cent of the cases were of children under ten.

An American, Dr. Paul Wilson, in 1922 first called yaws the primary physical curse of Haiti. He insisted "that the first need of rural Haiti was soap, salvarsan, and sunshine, and that the good Lord would furnish the sunshine."[10] The Haitian government immediately began to spend large sums to combat the disease. In the Jacmel region in one year (1925–26) 167,267 cases of yaws were treated; in 1926 over 200,000 injections of arsenicals against the disease were administered throughout the republic; and by 1931 the Public Health Service had given in twelve years 2,655,386 injections. Progress has been swift, but the fight against yaws is one which has to be waged continually.

It would probably be not far from the truth to say that for two centuries the majority of Haitian Negroes have been afflicted to a greater or less degree with malaria, hookworm, and yaws, either singly or together. Next to these dire diseases comes a group which seems to have affected from a tenth to one half the population: tuberculosis, dysentery, enteritis, and granular conjunctivitis. Tuberculosis progresses rapidly when it appears. The people have never developed a specific immunity to it, and promiscuous sex relations play their part in spreading the disease by contagion. In seven hundred autopsies performed in one year at the General Hospital of Port-au-Prince, twenty-six per cent of the deaths were due to tuberculosis. Spring water in the country districts is frequently pol-

7. M. G. Levacher, *Guide médical des Antilles* (Paris, 1847), p. 280.
8. Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdés, *La Historia natural y general de las Indias* (Madrid, 1558).
9. Dr. Parsons, *History of Haitian Medicine*, p. xviii, speaks of it as "blood brother of European syphilis, if not the same disease modified by age incidence, social environment, and racial difference."
10. *Ibid.*, p. xviii.